

MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES TO BREATHING PATTERN DISORDERS

Chaitow L, Bradley D, Gilbert C.

W B Saunders Co. 2002

ISBN: 9-443-0705-39

This book provides a truly multidisciplinary approach to a very common and difficult clinical presentation - hyperventilation syndrome. Many COCA members will know Leon Chaitow's work. He is a senior lecturer at the University of Westminster and is respected writer, lecturer and osteopathic practitioner. Dinah Bradley is a registered respiratory physiotherapist, and wrote the first patient handbook on hyperventilation syndrome. He is recognised internationally as an authority on breathing pattern disorders. Christopher Gilbert is a clinical psychologist with extensive experience in breathing pattern regulation, biofeedback and treatment of anxiety states. Formerly in private practice, he is now associated with the Chronic Pain Management Program at the Kaiser Permanente Medical Centre in San Francisco.

The book opens with three chapters of very detailed explanation of the structure, function and biochemistry of breathing. These chapters give the familiar anatomy that we all know a new slant, as it is all related to breathing. The level of detail is considerable but the whole section is very well referenced and quite readable.

There are several chapters on assessment of breathing pattern disorders (B.P.D's), principally hyperventilation syndrome (H.V.S.), which give an excellent insight into how widespread the problem is in our society.

The last part of the book deals with methods of breathing retraining and then a fascinating section on 'other breathing issues'. This section includes very interesting examinations of research into such things as Buteyko breathing exercises and the time-honoured practice of rebreathing into a paper bag to control acute hyperventilation associated with panic attacks. Once again, not all conventional wisdom is proved to be true.

The last chapter covers self-help approaches to hyperventilation. It provides alternative strategies that could be tried on various types of patients.

This book is written for, and would usually be read by, therapists who have an interest in breathing pattern disorders. It would be beyond the scope of most patients, although many would benefit from reading the self-help chapter. I have been treating hyperventilation using the Buteyko method for the last five years and I found this book riveting reading. As is so often the case several professions are converging on the same conclusion from different directions. It is most refreshing to see a genuinely multidisciplinary approach.

P.S. If you have any interest at all in either physiology; breathing; chickens or eggs you really should buy this book and read page 228 to find out how fragile eggs can be treated by feeding chickens soda water.

David Whittaker
